

Dewitt Farm
Southeast side of River Rd. ILR45012)
1.4 miles south of U.S. Rte. 209,
approximately 6 miles northeast of
Shannon on Delaware
Shawnee on Delaware vicinity, Middle
Smithfield Township
Monroe County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-1165

HABS
PA
45 - SHAWNEE
1

PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

Historic American Buildings Survey
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20243

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. PA-1165

DEWITT FARM

Location:

Southeast side of River Road (LR45012), 1.4 miles south of U.S. Rte. 209, approximately 6 miles NE of Shawnee on Delaware, in Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, Middle Smithfield Township, Monroe County, Pennsylvania.

USGS Bushkill Quadrangle, Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 18.498400.4545460.

Present Owner:

United States Government.

Present Use:

The main house, barn and woodshed were demolished sometime after 1970. The springhouse, which was partially destroyed in 1948 and then rebuilt, remains. An adjacent frame structure which housed a churn driven by an undershot water wheel, is not longer extant.

Significance:

The Dewitt Farm complex is an important contribution to the understanding of early nineteenth century farm planning in the Delaware region. The type of outbuildings, their construction and location relative to the main house exemplifies the functional relationships of a farm during this period.

Reaching its peak of prosperity during the 1830s, and declining in importance thereafter, the farm shows little sign of improvement since the early nineteenth century. The only additional structure was erected after the turn of the twentieth century and included a small frame building to house a churn and its gears.

The original farm house is of typical construction and appearance. The woodshed, which has structural similarities with the barn, has been very well preserved; outbuildings of this form and function have largely dissappeared from the region.

For over 130 years, the farm remained in the Dewitt family. This long association is of added significance.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

1. Dates of erection: The original section of the main farmhouse was erected circa 1798. The first indication that a structure had been erected on the Dewitt property is found in a 1798 tax list (1798 Pennsylvania Direct Tax List-Microfilm copy from National Archives) which states that Dewitt owned one parcel of 300 acres with two dwellings, valued at \$2100, and another parcel of 69 acres with one dwelling, valued at \$275.

The barn, a framed structure of hewn oak with mortise, tenon and pegged joining, was built early in the nineteenth century.

The two smaller outbuildings, the spring house and woodshed, are both early nineteenth century additions to the farm. The stone springhouse is located west of the main house and built with its northwest wall into a hillside. A small frame structure, which is no longer standing, and a pond lay adjacent to the spring house and were probably built in 1909.

The woodshed, southeast of the mainhouse, is very similar in construction to the barn. It also was built in the early 19th century.

2. Architect: Unknown: unlikely.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The following is an incomplete chain of title to the Dewitt farm.

1811 John Dewitt Sr. died Dec. 1811, Middle Smithfield Twp., Wayne Co., Pa., owning about 443 acres (Will Book, Vol. I, p. 26 Will #22, Honesdale, Wayne Co. Court House, Pa. and Deed of Partition 1816); his widow Catharine paid tax on some of the property until 1820 (Tax lists-Milford Pike Co. Pa. Court House).

1816 March 6, 1816 - Deed of Partition, Deed Book Volume I, pp. 327-28, Milford, Pike County, Pa. Jacob Dewitt, son of John Dewitt Sr., deceased received 2 adjoining tracts of land along the Delaware River in M. Smithfield Twp., Pike Co., Pa. (1) contained 40 acres and (2) contained 47 acres and 126 perches with messuages, edifices, buildings and improvements. Consideration not stated; designated as Lots #2 in partition.

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- 1823 August 25, 1823 Jacob Dewitt and wife granted the above mentioned property to John Turn, Jonas Hannah and Richard Eldred in trust (Deed Book, Volume 6, p. 12, Milford Court House, Pike Co., Pa.); on Dec. 30th, 1823 Jacob Dewitt assigned the property to Michael Heller and Mason Dimmick to administer the estate and pay proceeds to the creditors (Deed Book, Volume 6, p. 367, Milford, Pa.)
- 1828 Apr. 3, 1828 Jacob Dewitt and wife Elizabeth sold the above property to his brothers John and Samuel Dewitt for \$1,000; the property contained 86 acres (Deed Book, Vol. 8, pp 193-4, Milford Court House).
- 1838 June 30, 1838 Samuel Dewitt sold his share of the property to his brother John for \$1,000 (Volume I, p 171, Court House, Stroudsburg, Monroe County, Pa.); on Nov. 1838, Sarah Chambers (their sister) sold 2 tracts to John Dewitt for \$1032 (Volume 1, p. 157, Stroudsburg Court House).
- 1877 John Dewitt (b. 1804) known as Big John, died Dec. 5, 1877 intestate. File #810, Stroudsburg Court House and property descended to his two sons Henry and Samuel Dewitt.
- 1880 May 5, 1880 Samuel Dewitt (son of John who d. 1877) & wife Helen conveyed his share in the property to his brother Henry Dewitt; the property contained 105 acres (Volume 29, p. 344, Stroudsburg Court House); draft dated Dec. 3 & 4, 1879, copy owned by Mrs. Alphord Meyers.
- 1900 Henry Dewitt died intestate on Mar. 26, 1900 and his property descended to his only child, William F. Dewitt. (105 acres).
- 1935 William F. Dewitt, widower, conveyed the same property of 105 acres to Alphord and W. Earl Meyers on May 2, 1935 (Volume 222, p. 124, Court House, Stroudsburg, Monroe County, Pa.)
- 1948 Feb. 6, 1948 William Earl Meyers and wife Kathryn conveyed their share in the above property to his brother and wife, Alphord and Mabel Meyers (Volume 240, p. 432).
- 1958 Alphord Meyers died August 31, 1958, his Will, Volume 28, p. 417, probated Sept. 12, 1958, File #5689, Court House, Stroudsburg, Pa., devised the property to his widow Mabel Meyers in trust with the Monroe Security Bank and Trust Company as co-executors.

4. Original plan and construction: The stone springhouse with an adjacent pond and frame structure, is located west of the main house and built with its northwest wall into a hillside. The water, originating from the springhouse, was impounded by a small dam and operated a water wheel and a system of iron gears, which were contained in a small wooden building at the edge of the dam. The building is no longer standing; a photograph of it has been recorded. The purpose of the apparatus was to operate a churn.
5. Alterations and additions: In 1935, the house was remodeled in order to accommodate a second family. The alterations, primarily on the rear wing, included: making two bedrooms from three bedrooms on the second floor rear wing and the addition of a bathroom; and on the first floor wing, four rooms were made from two large rooms (two kitchens, a dining room and a living room). In the mainhouse, the fireplace in the front room first floor was rebuilt and a clothes closet was built in the front bedroom on the second floor.

On the exterior, a large porch was removed and the present entrance built. An old photograph shows that shutters once existed; it is not known, however, whether these were original. (see photocopy of photograph-HABS PA-1165-3).

Electricity was installed in the house in 1948, prior to that time kerosene lamps were used for lighting. In 1959 a bath and shower were installed off the front living room. Outside landscaping and planting by LeBar's Nursery were completed in 1936. Prior to 1948 the springhouse was used to cool and preserve foods and an ice box was used in the kitchen of the dwelling.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

The main road from Daniel Decker's Ferry over the Delaware River at Walpack Bend passed by this site from pre-Revolutionary times, until the Rosenkrans Ferry was established north of Bushkill, Pa. about 1898. Traffic from New York State and northern New Jersey used this early road. Col. Philip Van Cortland used this route in 1779 when he joined Col. John Sullivan's army at Ft. Penn (Stroudsburg Pa.). (See Pa. Historical Commission Marker near this site).

John Dewitt came to the area in the early 1770's and soon established himself as a prosperous farmer. In 1787 he and his wife, Cathrina Quick, joined the Smithfield Dutch Reformed Church at Shawnee-on-Delaware (N.Y. Genology and Biography Collection). According to the 1790 Census, he also had fathered six sons (three over the age of sixteen) and three daughters. By 1798 John Dewitt owned one parcel of 300 acres with two dwellings, valued at \$2100 and another parcel of 69 acre with one dwelling, valued at \$275. Isaac Winings resided on the latter property (1798-Pennsylvania Direct Tax List).

John Dewitt died in December 1811 owning 443 acres which he divided among his children. Jacob Dewitt recieved the farm complex which included two adjoining tracts of land along the Delaware River in Middle Smithfield Township. One tract contained 40 acres, the other contained 47 acres and 126 perches with messuages, edifices, buildings and improvements.

The farm remained in the family until 1935 when the property was conveyed to Alphord and W. Earl Meyers.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Old Views: Photograph of northwest (front) and southwest elevations. Photocopied by HABS-see HABS No. PA-1165-3.

Photograph of the building over the water wheel now demolished. Photocopied by HABS-see HABS No. PA-1165-B-6.

2. Maps: Atlas of Monroe County, Pa., by F.W. Beers, pub. 1875

1860 Map of Monroe and Carbon Co., Pa. by Loomis, Way and Palmer Co., (Monroe County Historical Society, Stroudsburg, Pa.)

3. Bibliography:

- a. Primary and unpublished Sources:

1. Interview with Mrs. Earl Treible (daughter of Wm. F. Dewitt) East Stroudsburg, Pa.
 2. Interview with Mrs. Alphord Meyers, owner, 1968.
 3. John Dewitt Jr. (b. 1804 - d. 1877) ledger owned by Mrs. Alphord Meyers, found in the attic of the present dwelling. Ledger covers years 1834-63 and 1873-93.
 4. 1850-1860-1870-1880 Census - Middle Smithfield Twp., Monroe Co., Pa. (original in National Archives, Washington, D.C.)
 5. Tax Lists for 1796-8, Archives Building, Easton, Pennsylvania. Unpublished Tax Lists.
 6. Pennsylvania Direct Tax List-1798. Microfilm copy from National Archives.
 7. 1790 Pennsylvania Census, published by Washington Government Printing Office, 1908. page 174.

8. Gravestone inscriptions - Sandhill M.E. Cem. Middle Smithfield Twp., Monroe County, Pa. (unpub. Monroe County Historical Society, Stroudsburg, Pa. and DAR Library, Washington, D.C.) grave-stone inscription, Bevans Cem., Peters Valley, Sussex Co., N.J.
9. Map of area ca. 1940 by Horace G. Walters.

Middle Smithfield Twp. was formed from Lower Smithfield Twp. about 1794-5 and placed in Wayne County when Wayne was formed in 1798; in 1814 Middle Smithfield Twp. was placed in Pike County when Pike County was formed; and remained in Pike County until Monroe County was formed in 1836. There are no tax lists extant for Middle Smithfield Twp. from 1798 through 1813 in Wayne Co. Honesdale Court House. The tax lists from 1814 until 1835 for M. Smithfield Twp. are on file at the Court House in Milford, Pike Co., Pa.)

b. Secondary and published Sources:

LeRoy, Jennings Koehler, Monroe County During the Civil War, pub. 1950, Stroudsburg, Pa. p 164.

Mathews, Alfred, History of Wayne, Pike County and Monroe Co., Pa., pub. by R.T. Peck & Co., Phila. Pa., 1886, pp 1106, 1113 and 1062.

New York Gen. and Biog. Coll. Vol. 8, p 93 (Smithfield Dutch Ref. Ch. Rec) pub. 1928.

Stroudsburg Times, Mar. 29, 1900 (Monroe Co. Historical Society, Stroudsburg, Pa.) (Obituary of Henry Dewitt)

Prepared by Mrs. Elizabeth D. Walters
Historian
Delaware Water Gap
National Recreation Area
July-September, 1968.
and
Wesley Shank and Wm. C. Badger
Project Historians
Historic American Buildings
Survey
August, 1970

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The part of the house nearest the road is the original house, and is very small in plan. Over the years, it grew with the addition of a larger wing on the rear of the house; a small one story shed was added later. The house is frame, two-and-one-half stories high and has horizontal lapped siding.
2. Condition of fabric: Good.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. The original house measures 26'-2" (three bays) x 18'-3" (single pile); an addition, 18'-0" wide and 27'-11" long, is attached to the back forming an ell with the original house. The rear addition is also two-and-one-half stories, although the floor levels in it is six risers lower than the floors of the original house.
2. Foundations: Random rubble limestone. The cellar is under the front portion only.
3. Wall construction, finish and color: The dwelling is covered with white six inch clapboards on wood frame, except at the side porch (southwest), where the wall is composed of wide, beaded horizontal boards, also painted white.
4. Structural system, framing: The timbers supporting the first floor span the foundation under the original portion and are hewn on the top and bottom, leaving the bark on the sides. In the attic, the rafters are lap jointed and pegged and are flattened on the upper side only. A few sawn rafters appear to be replacements or additional rafters for strengthening.
5. Porches, stoops, bulkheads, etc: The small front porch was restored according to an old drawing of the house. The gabled portico is supported on four square columns, and has a flagstone stoop. In the corner of the ell, there is a large covered porch facing west. This porch has a wooden floor, with an accessway to the cellar. A third porch is on the east side of the addition and consists of a small portico with a stone stoop.
6. Chimneys: The house has two chimneys. The large interior end chimney on the west end of the house vents the large fireplace in the living room and contained a chimney base in the cellar which has a hearth with wood lintels spanning the opening. It has recently been filled in with stone work; the chimney is stone to the roofline and brick above. The other chimney is centralized in the addition and was used to vent coal and wood-burning stoves.

7. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: The front doorway has a three light transom above a six-panel solid door. The door is one riser up from the front porch. The original back door of the original house is now an interior door. There are exterior doorways from the addition; two on the porch on the west side, and two on the east side. These doorways are very simple, and have four-panel solid doors common in the rest of the addition.
- b. Windows and shutters: All windows are double-hung wood sash with nine-over-six-light sashes on the ground floor and six-over-six light on the second floor. In the addition, the first floor windows were originally six-over-six light, but have been replaced with solid glass panels. The upstairs windows remain six-over-six light also.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape and covering: The gable roof on the original house is covered with gray slates and is decorated with small patterns. The gable roof on the rear addition is perpendicular to the main portion and contains a standing-seam metal roof. The one story projection at the side (southwest) has a shed roof with a white mineral surfaced roofing material.
- b. Cornice, eaves: A small decorative boxed cornice at the eaves of the original house returns partially on the gable ends as found in Greek Revival work.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. First floor: The front door opens directly into the larger of two downstairs rooms, presently the living room (16'-5"x17'-3"). To the left, a smaller room has been made into a bathroom. Six risers down to the addition, is a dining room and to the left, a kitchen. Beyond the dining room and kitchen wall is a long living room and a small attached kitchen.
- b. Second floor: In the original house, there are two upstairs rooms, now bedrooms. Six risers down in the addition is a long hall ending in a partial winder stair, and on the right, two bedrooms and a bath.

- c. Cellar: Only under the original house. Access is from the porch.
- d. Attic: Low and unfinished, with two windows on each end.
- 2. Stairways: From the living room, the dining room is six risers down. Also from the living room, an enclosed stairway leads up to the landing, turns left 90° and continues to the second floor. From the landing, entrance to the second floor of the addition is also obtained. At the south end of the addition on the second floor, a partial winder stair leads down to the first floor.
- 3. Flooring: Original pine boards in old portion, vary 6"-10" and run E-W; in the addition, 6"-10" boards runs N-S.
- 4. Wall and ceiling finish: With the exception of the original house, the ceilings are plaster throughout. In the original house, the ceilings are covered with 4"-6" beaded boards, painted white, and running E-W.
- 5. Doorways and doors: Interior doors are 6'-5" high, with five panels, raised on one side. Addition: doors are four-panel, raised on one side.
- 6. Decorative features and trim: Rooms in the older portion have chair rails and high base molding. In first floor of addition, the large room has a dado of horizontal boards; the smaller kitchen has a wainscoting of vertical headed boards.
- 7. Notable hardware: Hand wrought lift latches on door to attic, other hardware is box-type locks with ceramic knob. Door to cellar has 2" strap hinges with round ends attached to frame as HL hinge.
- 8. Lighting: Until the 1940's, oil lamps were used for lighting; after that time, electricity was used.
- 9. Heating: A fireplace heated the large room in original house, another fireplace in the cellar may have been used for cooking. The addition was heated by coal and wood-burning heaters, which have since been removed. No heating exists for the house at present.

D. Site:

- 1. General setting and orientation: House faces 39° north of west, and approximately 15' back from the road. It is in a rural setting, with no other houses visible. A densely forested hill is located beyond the road on the front of the house. The property drops off at the back of the house, which is in the direction of the river.

2. Outbuildings:

- a. Barn (HABS No. PA-1165-A): The Dewitt barn is a good example of early bank barns in the Delaware River valley. Like most farm buildings in the vicinity, the barn is devoid of ornamentation, but is structurally very interesting and still retains the original animal stalls in the lower level.

Approximately 31'x45' in over-all dimensions, the long one-and-one-half story northwest (front) elevation faces the road. Laid on a random rubble stone foundation with major posts worked into the fabric, the mortise, tenon and pinned framing structure rises 34'-3" above the dirt floor on the lower level. Unpainted vertical wood siding covers a stud wall with 9"-15" planking on the northwest and northeast elevations. The southwest elevation is covered with 6"-8" horizontal siding and the southeast (rear) elevation is covered with jointed metal.

The roofing structure is composed of log-type rafters, pegged at the ridge and notched into the plate at the top of the frame. It is covered with galvanized V-lap iron.

While there are no windows on the front elevation, two large rolling doors cover a 12'-6" x 15'-10" wide opening accessible from the road. The rolling doors have vertical board on the exterior, horizontal board on the interior, and is suspended by cast hangers on a metal track. In the sheltered area under the southeast (rear) portion, there are four dutch-type doors that open into the lower level. There is also a dutch door in the northeast end foundation wall and one vertical boarded door off the feed room on the northeast end.

There are no windows in the upper level with the exception of two curious diamond-shaped openings, six inches on a side, located symmetrically in the gable of the southwest end. There were three windows in the lower level, one on the back side (southeast), and another on the northeast and southwest sides. No glass remains in the openings although there are frames which once held glass. The two windows in the ends of the lower floor were possibly six light windows. The barn had no shutters.

The interior floor plans consist of a ground level used primarily for housing and feeding animals and the first floor used for storage. In the lower level, a walkway sheltered by the extended back portion of the upper floor is connected to the interior lower level by four doorways. Animals were kept here and the feed troughs are still in their original positions. The troughs separate the animal stalls from an interior walkway which had a doorway at the south end and two stairways to the upper level.

On the upper level, the large space was arranged symmetrically with the two rolling doors on the short axis. Two levels of storage flanked the center high space. The upper story of these two levels may have continued across the entire length of the barn in more prosperous times; there are large beams still in place at this level.

The only notable hardware is found on the dutch doors in the lower level. Here, the original strap hinges were 2'-0" long, hand wrought, and have simple enlarged ends. There are two hand wrought bolt locks on each dutch-type door.

b. Springhouse (HABS No. PA-1165-B):

The springhouse backed against the road is the most unusual found to date in its relation to water and the surrounding area. It is 21'-10" x 14'-6" in size and a low one story in height.

The wall construction is of random rubble stone, white washed outside and inside. The stone bearing walls are capped by wood rafters and collar beams to form a gable roof with wooden shingles. A louvered cupola and rake overhang of recent vintage is centered on the ridge. The low entrance door is on the front with a four light window.

A single rectangular room composes the floor plan. There is a duck board type floor at one end made of old timbers and planks, while the rest of the floor is open dirt.

The most unusual feature is the long dam in the manner of a reflecting pool which flows from the building. A spillway is located at the far corner of the dam and another in the form of a sluiceway, located about eight feet below the dam in which are the remains (iron shaft and gears) of a water wheel. The stone ruins surrounding the wheel pit indicate a small mill; a small frame structure once housed a churn driven by an undershot water wheel. A photocopy of a photograph of the frame structure is included in this report-see HABS No. PA-1165-B-6.

c. Woodshed (HABS No. PA-1165-C):

The woodshed on the Dewitt farm is typical of the nineteenth century and is laid on a stone foundation. It is unique because most of the oldwood sheds of this type have largely disappeared.

This small building is entirely of wood frame construction with vertical wood siding varying in width 8" to 18". On the two end walls the siding boards run the full wall height whereas on the back, they are in two sections with a joint in the middle. They are painted white.

The framing is straightforward with six columns, one each at the extremities and one on each side in the middle. The columns are approximately 8" x 8" with exception of those on east wall which are larger, approximately 9" x 12". There are spanning members across the short distance at the columns and diagonal braces for lateral stability. All connections are mortised and tenoned, and pegged similar to general barn construction in the area. The roof rafters are small logs, approximately 6" in diameter the roof is gable with slates.

There are no doors or windows as such. The front is entirely open to the right side (facing building) and from the ground to a height of 4' on the left. Siding extends from that point to the roof.

The interior is ostensibly one open space with what appears to have been a loft space above at one time. It is completely void of finish materials, special decorative features or notable hardware.

Prepared by Kenneth N. Clark
Architect
Historic American
Buildings Survey
August, 1968

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) in cooperation with the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, supervised by the National Park Service and funded by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The project, which extended from 1967 to 1971, was under the general direction of James C. Massey, Chief of HABS. This structure was measured and drawn in the summer of 1968 under the direction of

Kenneth N. Clark (University of Arizona), Project Supervisor, by student assistant architects Andrei T. Ranks (Howard University), Gary W. Kreger (University of Virginia), and John R. Naughton (University of Illinois) in the HABS field office at Bangor, Pennsylvania in the project area of the Tocks Island Reservoir and the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area. The historical data was written by Elizabeth D. Walters, historian with the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area in 1968 and project historians, Wesley Shank and William C. Badger in 1970. The written data was edited for transmittal to the Library of Congress in the summer of 1980 by Kent R. Newell of the HABS staff. The photographs were taken by George Eiserman in 1968 and Jack E. Boucher in 1968.